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ABSTRACT

The United Nations General Assembly has proclaimed 1994 as International Year of the Family with the theme, "Family: Resources and Responsibilities in a Changing World." Objectives for the year include increasing awareness of family issues among governments and the private sector, highlighting the importance of families, increasing understanding of their problems, promoting knowledge of the economic and social processes affecting families, and focusing attention upon the rights and responsibilities of all family members. This document presents the following materials for schools to celebrate the year of the family: (1) suggestions for how schools can plan to be involved in The Year of the Family; (2) Year of the Family logos; (3) a proclamation form from the state superintendent; (4) a quiz to test the knowledge about issues facing the American family; (5) ideas for teaching children about different cultures; (6) a worksheet on family issues and concerns; (7) suggestions for creating hunger awareness; (8) tips for creating a family history; (9) parenting principles to teach about using money wisely; (10) some do's and don'ts for grandparents; and (11) a reference list on global awareness, family communication, peace education, and grandparenting. (WP)

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ED 376 937

FAMILIES IN EDUCATION

1994 International Year of the Family

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1994 International Year of the Family logo sheet
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1994 is designated "The International Year of the Family" in Wisconsin Schools.

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This article contains suggestions for grandparents on how to foster loving, happy relationships with their grandchildren.

Resources for Further Reading and Information
Use these references to learn more about global awareness, family communications, peace education, and grandparenting.

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FAMILIES IN EDUCATION

1994 International Year of the Family

1994—International Year of the Family

How Schools Can Plan to be Involved

The United Nations General Assembly has proclaimed 1994 as International Year of the Family (IYF) with the theme, "Family: resources and responsibilities in a changing world." The U.N. proclamation recognizes the growing concern that our society has failed to adequately provide for children and their families, a failure with serious consequences for the future.

IYF is centered around the belief that the family is the basic unit of society and that programs should support and preserve the inherent strengths of families, including their great capacity for self-reliance. Objectives for the year include increasing awareness of family issues among governments and the private sector, highlighting the importance of families, increasing understanding of their problems, promoting knowledge of the economic and social processes affecting families, and focusing attention upon the rights and responsibilities of all family members.

State Superintendent John Benson is encouraging Wisconsin schools to initiate their own efforts and has proclaimed 1994 as "The International Year of the Family in Wisconsin Schools."

Activities that schools might consider in planning their own celebrations of the family in 1994 include:

- *holding a photography exhibition of students' families* to portray a wide array of images of family: strong families, urban and rural families, single-parent families, racially diverse families, and turn-of-the-century and modern-day immigrant families.
- *purchasing and displaying books about families* in the school library.
- *holding community forums* to discuss local issues affecting family life in your schools and community. Invite individuals from many faiths, races, and cultures to participate and effectively address the issues.
- *organizing a "Day for the Family"* in your school or district. Include exhibits, food, and performances celebrating different family cultures from around the world. Also offer families suggestions on how to improve their own health, well-being, learning, and enjoyment of time spent together.
- *developing instructional plans* that help students understand global relationships, such as hunger in America, in Africa, and other countries throughout the world.
- *publishing a family recipe collection* which includes family "stories" about the recipes and/or about the member of the family who championed the recipe.
- *encouraging students to learn about the role of families* in various cultural and social contexts during the year.
- *organizing school fundraising efforts and youth service learning projects* that raise student awareness about families in need.

In short, use your imagination and "think family!" Take stock of the issues and problems families in your school or district are facing, and brainstorm on ways that some of these concerns could be resolved.

Develop a concrete plan of action for 1994 and beyond, and be sure to involve decisionmakers and lawmakers in the planning process to give high priority to policies, programs, and services benefitting families.

The International Year of the Family is an excellent time to expand or improve your family involvement efforts and to heighten community awareness about family issues and build partnerships with local organizations that promote the well-being of families and children.

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A heart sheltered by a roof,
linked by another heart, to symbolize life and love in a home where one finds warmth, caring, security, togetherness, tolerance and acceptance—that is the symbolism conveyed by the emblem of the International Year of the Family (IYF), 1994. The open design is meant to indicate continuity with a hint of uncertainty. The brushstroke, with its open line roof, completes an abstract symbol representing the complexity of the family.

1994 International Year of the Family
Année internationale de la famille
Año Internacional de la Familia
Международный год семьи
السنة الدولية للأسرة
国际家庭年

1994 International Year of the Family
Année internationale de la famille

Use logo as devised.
Keep each intact.

1994 International Year of the Family

WISCONSIN

Department of Public Instruction

A Proclamation

Whereas, in acknowledgment that the United Nations General Assembly has designated 1994 as the International Year of the Family with the theme, "Family: resources and responsibilities in a changing world," and

Whereas, we know that the family is the oldest, most firmly grounded human institution, and that parents and family members are the first and most influential teachers of the young, and

Whereas, it is our collective, democratic responsibility to safeguard and promote the ability of families to educate and nurture children to become productive and contributing citizens, and

Whereas, citizens, and Wisconsin schools, communities, and workplaces can encourage "family-friendly" policies, practices, and activities,

Therefore, be it resolved that, 1994 be proclaimed

"The International Year of the Family"
in Wisconsin Schools

FAMILIES IN EDUCATION

1994 International Year of the Family

John T. Benson, State Superintendent

Date

FAMILIES IN EDUCATION

1994 International Year of the Family

Family Issues Quiz

Ten things about families that parents and teachers ought to know

Test your knowledge about the issues facing America's families. Our survival as a nation will depend on the ability of our families to guide, love, and transmit the values of a civil society to the next generation. How much do you know about the changing realities of families?

Answers follow each question.

1. What portion of American children lived in poverty in 1992?
   A. 5%
   B. 12%
   C. 22%

   Answer: C. The Children's Defense Fund estimated that nearly 22%, or 14.6 million children lived in poverty in 1992, making it the fourth straight year the child poverty rate increased. Families of four earning less than $12,675 a year fell below the poverty line.

2. How many preschool children in this country receive day care from someone other than their parents?
   A. 2/3
   B. 1/2
   C. 1/3

   Answer: A. More than two-thirds of preschool children nationwide, or about 5.7 million, were receiving care or education from a relative or nonrelative, according to the U.S. Department of Education's National Household Education Survey in 1991.

3. How many American children will drop out of school this year?
   A. 25,000
   B. 550,000
   C. One million

   Answer: C. The U.S. Department of Education estimates that nearly one million young people will leave the nation's public schools this year without graduating. Each year's class of dropouts costs the nation more than $240 billion in lost earnings and foregone taxes over their lifetimes.

4. What percentage of American children are growing up with little or no contact with their fathers?
   A. 25%
   B. 17%
   C. 8%

   Answer: A. The 1990 U.S. Census shows that 15 million American children, or nearly one-quarter of all those under 18, live with their mothers. Some 10 million are the product of divorced or separated parents and about 5 million are the product of out-of-wedlock births.

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5. How many more American children lived with their grandparents in 1990 than in 1980?
   A. 18% more
   B. 25% more
   C. 40% more

Answer: C. The 1990 U.S. Census estimates that about 4 million children live in the same home with their grandparents, or about 40% more than in 1980. Officials say the "five D's"—divorce, drugs, desertion, death, and disease—are the primary causes of grandparents assuming the parenting role.

6. How does America's infant mortality rate rank among the nations of the world?
   A. First—we have the lowest number of infants who die in their first year of life.
   B. Fifth—we are slightly behind several other nations.
   C. Twentieth—we rank low on the list, behind nations such as Spain and Singapore.

Answer: C. In 1990, nearly 40,000 American babies died before their first birthdays, according to the U.S. Center for Health Statistics. This rate reflects the health of the mother, the health of the baby, the condition in which the baby lives, and the parenting he or she receives. A black baby born in the shadow of the White House is more likely to die in the first year of life than a baby born in Jamaica or Trinidad.

7. How many American children are in families without health insurance?
   A. 7%
   B. 13%
   C. 20%

Answer: C. Nearly 20%, or 12 million American children are uninsured and have little or no access to basic health care, such as immunizations. Consequently, nearly half of small children are not protected against polio, and 17,850 cases of measles were reported in 1989, up from 1,500 cases in 1983 (report to the Select Committee on Children, Youth, and Families).

8. How has the amount of time parents spend with children in an average week changed since 1960?
   A. Gained 5-6 hours per week
   B. Lost 5-6 hours per week
   C. Lost 10-12 hours per week

Answer: C. Economist Victor Fuchs estimates that children have lost 10-12 hours of parental time per week during the last three decades because of the increase in the number of working mothers, single-parent families, and hours parents spend at work. The average worker spends about six more hours per week at work than in 1973.

9. How has the median income of families with children changed during the past decade?
   A. Rose by 5%
   B. Fell by 5%
   C. Stayed even

Answer: B. Between 1979 and 1990, the real median income of families with children fell by 5%, while the costs of housing, health care, transportation, and education rose. The Center for the Study of Social Policy estimates that the income of America's wealthiest families rose 9% during that time while the income of our poorest families fell 13%.

10. How much has the teen death rate changed during the 80s?
   A. Fell by 3%
   B. Increased by 5%
   C. Increased by 11%

Answer: C. From 1984-89, the teen death rate from accidents, homicides, and suicides increased by 11%. Most white teens die in accidents, but twice as many African-American teens die in homicides as in accidents. A 1993 report by the United Nations' Children's Fund found that nine out of ten young people murdered in industrialized countries were killed in the U.S.

FAMILIES IN EDUCATION

1994 International Year of the Family

Learning to Live Together

Ideas for Teaching Children

As we journey to the year 2000, we need a vision of family that moves us beyond our own family, school, and neighborhood. We need a vision of family that includes a recognition of ourselves as part of a global family.

Teachers and parents are challenged to bestow upon children a vision of family that includes all the people who share life and resources in our global village. The cares and concerns we have for our own children are similar to the cares and concerns families have for each other the world over.

Children can be empowered as individuals by considering their personal responses to global concerns with questions such as:

- *How am I and others close to me affected by this issue, decision, or action?*
- *How are persons in other cultures and other lands affected by this decision?*
- *What changes would I need to consider in our own family so that my decisions and actions enhance the quality of life for my family and others?*

What will life be like on this planet for us and our families by the year 2000? We still share many similarities with the village life of the 1900s. Village people are acutely aware of their mutual dependence for goods and services. They know the danger that epidemics or natural catastrophes in one section of a village pose to another.

Phrases such as "spaceship earth, global village, and earth's ecosystem" all testify to our growing recognition of the mutual interdependence of all peoples in our world. This is evident when we speak of food planted and harvested in one part of the world and shipped via truck or plane for sale to consumers thousands of miles away.

It is evident when Florida suffers a damaging frost or California suffers a drought, and consumers in Wisconsin pay higher prices for produce harvested in those states. It is evident when a strike in one industry or part of a country prevents the availability of goods in another.

Global interdependence is also evident when we pause to consider the distribution and use of our natural resources, lumber, oil, minerals, and metals abundant in one country and needed in another. And it is evident in the eyes of children, suffering because of air, water, or land pollution caused by oil spills, chemical wastes, or A-bomb testing vast distances away.

There are other areas of our lives where global interdependence is not so evident to the casual observer. Few of us see children dying of malnutrition in the activities of our daily lives. Few of us experience the poverty of the subsistence laborer who toils to bring sugar or lettuce to our table. And few of us know the feeling of despair which accompanies an inability to provide for the daily survival needs of our children.

Yet these, too, are signs of our global interdependence: people suffering, hurting, dying because of governmental policies or the lifestyle choices of others. What does this suffering say to us if we really believe we are all part of a global family?

What effect does the following have on your family:

- political unrest in the Middle East?
- apartheid in South Africa?
- political persecution of ethnic groups in Bosnia and Serbia?
- hunger in the barrios of Latin America?
- pollution from nuclear power plants or chemical waste disposal?
- nuclear weapons testing in the atmosphere or in the sea?
- strip mining in Appalachia, Montana, or Utah?
- striking lettuce growers or textile workers?

The following activities for school groups or families may help make children more aware of other cultures, how to play cooperatively, and how to solve problems peacefully.

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Doctor Tangle

Any number of children can play, but if there are more than 12, split them into two groups.

Procedure: two children agree to play the role of Dr. Tangle and remove themselves momentarily from the group. The remaining players form a circle and join hands, facing the center of the circle.

Without breaking hands, children in the circle twist and tangle themselves up to form a human pretzel. When the pretzel is complete, usually in one or two minutes, call on the doctors to unravel the pretzel.

The doctors should work together to solve the problem. The joined hands may not be unjoined and players may not be hurt in the untangling process.

Animal Sculptures

This game fosters group work on a common project and encourages decision-making skills in children chosen to be the leader. Very young children can play this game, too. If there are more than five players, form two groups.

Procedure: two persons sit out to be "guessers." "Guessers" work together to solve problems.

Begin with the youngest player. Think of an animal and tell its name to the group. The youngest person then arranges the members of the group to form the animal named. For example: five players form one elephant, one dolphin, or one lobster.

The persons or group that sat out can now come in and attempt to guess the animal. Rotate the "guessers" so both little and big people have a turn at being decision-makers and group planners. Sculptures can also depict farm machinery, transportation, small appliances, or any of your own ideas.

Family Games Revisited

Most family games can be re-organized in a surprisingly easy way to encourage cooperative play. Agree upon rule changes before starting play.

Bingo—play the game in such a way that filling all the squares of all players' cards becomes the goal.

Parcheesi™, Sorry™, Trouble™—when players land on a space occupied by another token, move that token ahead for an agreed-upon number of spaces (for example, 1-2-3).

Make it a group game with shared ownership of the pieces. Every player may move any token on the board. The object is to see if all tokens can finish by reaching the "home" at the same time. This also allows more than four players at any one time.

Family Activities to Learn About Different Cultures

Plan an imaginary trip to a foreign country with your child. With the aid of books, videos, and maps, imagine what you would see and eat, what language the people would speak, and how you would travel.

Learn how to say *hello* in several languages. Find a book that includes words from many languages and teach your child a simple phrase in each.

Prepare a recipe from another country. Find a cookbook from another country at your local library and make a food your family would enjoy. Be sure to talk about the produce used to make it, the weather in which the produce grows, and the history behind the food.

Discover the rich folklore of another country. Read stories or sing songs from other countries with your children. Talk about the similarities and differences in what you see and hear.

Like Me—Like You

This activity affirms differences and similarities within the family. Family members sit in a circle on the floor or around a table. One person at a time turns to those on the right and left and states three similarities and three differences about themselves compared to the other person.

For example: I notice that your hair is brown like mine, we are both wearing red shirts, and we both have blue eyes.

I also notice that your hair is short, mine is long; I am wearing glasses and you are not; and you are sitting cross-legged and I am not.

Take turns until everyone has a chance to list similarities and differences. Vary the game by encouraging participants to talk about similarities in study habits, likes and dislikes, and others.

Adapted from *Learning to Live Together At Home and in the World*, by Jacqueline Haessly. Haessly is founder and volunteer director of the Milwaukee Peace Education Center, 2437 North Grant Blvd., Milwaukee, WI 53210.

FAMILIES IN EDUCATION

1994 International Year of the Family

All Issues Are Inter-Related

A Worksheet on Family Issues and Concerns

Responses to complex social issues require new thinking and new connections. Responses to these problems and issues need to come from an interdependent network of people, including students, individual citizens and representatives from private and public agencies, religious and secular organizations, and corporate and government institutions acting together at local, county, state, regional, national, and international levels.

We must identify needs, seek holistic solutions, and create family policies and practices which enhance family and societal life for all people.

Housing	Education	Health Care	Energy
Cultural	Human Rights		
Food	Lifestyle		Employment
Transportation		Human Relations	
Recreation	Environment		Religion
Child Care	Militarism		Relationships

1. Please circle the areas above which most concern you as an individual.
2. Draw a line between issues which concern you and those you believe are related to your issue.
3. Share your responses with others.
4. What would a "family-friendly" society look like to you?

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1994 International Year of the Family

Creating Hunger Awareness

Ideas for Families

We are witnessing a dramatic increase in the number of hungry and malnourished Americans. It is estimated that one out of every 12 children in the United States is hungry. Hungry children have a difficult time learning.

A hungry child is:

- three times as likely to suffer from unwanted weight loss
- four times as likely to suffer from fatigue
- three times as likely to suffer from irritability
- twelve times as likely to report dizziness
- twice as likely to have frequent headaches
- three times as likely to suffer from concentration problems
- twice as likely to have frequent colds.

If your family is fortunate enough to have adequate resources for food, you may wish to sensitize yourself to the experiences hungry families have. Your family may wish to try one of the following:

- Study an underdeveloped country to learn about their food habits. Prepare a day's menus and compare to a typical American's daily menu. Discuss differences in food availability, methods of food acquisition, and economic factors affecting food choices.
- Find out what sources of food are available in your community for hungry people. County and local health departments, religious organizations, and community advocacy groups may provide these services in your community. Food pantries, soup kitchens, and hunger drives are some activities you can explore. Volunteer to work at a food pantry for a day. Discuss how food costs are kept low and nutritional values high in the foods offered. Serve the menus used to your family and compare it to a typical meal your family eats.
- Collect all your family's change for a month and use it to buy food to donate to a hungry family. Evaluate how many meals you will be able to serve with the amount of change collected.
- Volunteer to deliver food care packets to families during the holidays. Observe the reception of individuals. Many hungry families are proud of the resources they have but welcome your contributions.
- Initiate a food collection in your neighborhood. A non-perishable food item could serve as admission to a community sports event or other popular activity.
- Choose one day where you only eat one meal as few hungry people have the luxury of eating three meals a day. Discuss how family members felt about not having access to food and how they dealt with any hunger pains.
- Eat only food such as brown rice and water for one meal—or maybe for all meals one day. It is typical that hungry people only have access to staple food items—especially towards the end of the month when money for food is scarce. Were you satisfied?
- Find out what bills are before the state legislature and federal Congress. Study the contents and write legislators indicating your support. Track how the bill moves through the legislature and study its impact if passed or reasons for non-authorization.
- Don't eat out for a week except for school lunch/breakfast. Evaluate the additional amount of time spent preparing food and discuss what your family had to give up in order to provide meals. Donate any money saved to a food bank.
- Find out what food items can and cannot be purchased using food stamps. Discuss what additional food items your family typically purchases and if your family could do without them.
- The United States Department of Agriculture establishes weekly costs of food at home for three different cost levels. For a family of four with school-age children, the liberal cost plan allows $164.20 for food; moderate allows $136.60; low-cost is $109.20, and thrifty $85.20. Keep track of your family's food costs for one week and see which category you fit into. For a week, plan meals fitting into the next lower category and identify what changes you needed to make in your family's eating habits.

This article was written by Barbara Hetzel, DPI Nutrition Education Coordinator, with contributions from Jane Voichick, Ph.D., University of Wisconsin-Madison, Nutritional Sciences/Cooperative Extension.

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FAMILIES IN EDUCATION

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Celebrate Your Family—Create a Family History!

A Special Project for Families to do Together

One of the most unique and lasting gifts you can give your children is a recollection of your personal family history. Whether you are a parent, an aunt, uncle, or grandparent, the stories and memories of your lifetime experiences that you take time to preserve will be one of the most precious heirlooms you can leave for the next generation—and beyond.

Following are some tips on getting started and involving children.

Getting Started

Choose your medium. If you are most comfortable writing things down in a quiet place, ask the child to help you compose a list of questions or choose from the sample list that follows, and decide upon a format for your answers (looseleaf binder? letters? photo album?). Be sure that you get the child to comment on or ask questions about what he or she has read.

If you use a tape recorder or videocamera, choose a quiet place away from any possible interruptions. The child may want to act as "interviewer." A location special to your family may be a most suitable place for videotaping.

Another option: look through an old photo album or school yearbook with the child. Tell and record stories about the people and events in them.

Details make the story. Don't be afraid to talk about the little things—the way your mother kept her hair, what happened at Uncle Ted's surprise birthday party, how you made your husband's favorite pie. It's the detail that will add color, depth, and richness to the picture of life years ago that you are "capturing" for your young family members.

Memories spur more memories. Follow the winding and pleasant path that your thoughts take. The sample questions are meant to prompt, not govern, memories and observations. Your family has characteristics and experiences unique from anyone else's and there's no better way to illustrate its "specialness" to a child than through stories.

Sample Questions

About You and Your Family

- Do you remember seeing me for the first time?
- What did you do for fun when you were my age?
- What was the house like that you grew up in?
- What was your grandparents' house like? Did it have any special smells?
- Did your parents cook you any favorite foods?
- What countries did the first members of our family to arrive in America come from?
- Did you and your parents take any trips?
- Did your parents have any favorite sayings or funny habits? Do you have them too?
- How did your father and mother make a living?
- Did you always get along with your brothers and sisters?

About Childhood and School

- Did you collect anything or have a hobby?
- Did you have a pet?

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- Did you ever get sick or injured as a child? How were you taken care of?
- Do you remember your first day of school? Did you like your teacher?
- Who were your best friends? Were there any school bullies?
- Did you ever have a big storm or flood when you were a child?
- What was your favorite subject in high school?
- Were you involved in any extra-curricular activities, sports, or clubs?
- How did you make spending money in high school?
- How did you celebrate graduating from high school?

About Holidays and Celebrations

- Did you ever have a birthday party that you especially remember?
- Did your family prepare any special foods to celebrate Christmas/Hanukkah/Easter?
- Did you celebrate Thanksgiving with other relatives?
- How did Christmas morning feel as a child?
- Does your family have any special traditions to celebrate one of the holidays?
- How did you feel the day you were married? Where did you go on your honeymoon?
- Did you ever play tricks on anyone for Halloween?

About the Times

- Do you remember the Great Depression?
- Were you or any of our relatives in a war?
- What were you doing the day Pearl Harbor was attacked?
- Did you vote for John F. Kennedy?
- Who do you think our best president was? Why?
- Did you have a television set/refrigerator/outhouse when you were growing up?
- Who did everyone say you looked like in our family when you were growing up? Do I look like anyone?
- Who taught you to drive a car? What kind was it?
- Did you have to help your family with any chores? Jobs?
- How have you changed since you were a child? What made you change?
- What kind of person do you hope I grow up to be?

FAMILIES IN EDUCATION

1994 International Year of the Family

Principles for Parents:

How to Teach Your Child About Money

By Connie Kilmark
Kilmark and Associates
Personal Money Management
Madison, Wisconsin

Parents are often unsure of when or how to teach their children about the value of money. The following tips may give you some ideas about what is important as you teach your child about using money wisely.

Respect basic personality characteristics in your child. Some kids are spontaneous and impulsive. Others are slow, methodical decision makers. Both kinds of people are OK—just different, with different money handling lessons to learn. As the old adage goes, "Children are not to be molded, just unfolded."

Use an allowance as a teaching tool, not as a reward-punishment mechanism. Fit the amount and frequency to the child's age, interests, and maturity level. Make allowance a dependable event.

Create an allowance contract with input from both parent and child. The contract should be signed by both parent and child. Spell out what allowance will cover. Allow some money each week for making choices, and even mistakes. Set a date in the contract for re-negotiation based on a cost-of-living increase. Make payday on Monday or Tuesday to allow the child more practice at deferring gratification before the weekend.

Don't pay for grades or basic cooperative tasks around the house—it corrupts motivation in the child by making money the reason for cooperating. It also invests money with too much emotional significance when the parent is either disapproving or approving while giving the allowance.

Don't routinely rescue a child when he or she runs out of allowance. Learning comes from living with the real consequences of decisions. Repeated rescues are not loving; they can be disabling.

When a child makes a spending mistake, don't rub salt in the wound by saying, "I told you so." Let the child have his or her feelings of disappointment and even anger, and then move the child toward a plan of action for the future.

Encourage children to save for and purchase their own gifts for others. The pleasure of giving a gift bought with "my own money" is very precious.

Use care in teaching children how to save money. The concept of time develops very slowly in children. Reward deferral of gratification promptly and in a way that is meaningful to the child. Stretch the ability to defer slowly, and help your child set realistic goals which motivate him or her. For a young child, a bicycle or special game works better than trying to motivate him or her to save for college. More abstract goals are more appropriate for older children.

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Share family financial information regularly and in an age-appropriate manner. Share financial problems with reassurance about the solutions you are working on. Outline backup plans should the first strategy not succeed. Be specific about what children can do to help. Create experiences which help children understand where the family money goes and what "afford" means. Don't assume children understand what you mean when you say, "We can't afford it."

Clarify your own values about money, success, status, "making it," generosity, sharing, privacy, and private property. Share these values verbally with your children, remembering always that your actions will be more influential than your words. Be sure they match up.

Be sensitive to children's peer environment in the school and the community. Instead of emphasizing who has more or less, talk about "enough" or "sufficient." Use phrases such as, "We are lucky to have what we need." Be patient with your child's concern with what other kids have, but do not be controlled by it.

Kilmark directed the Madison Consumer Credit Counseling Service for 12 years before founding her own Madison-based counseling and consulting firm, Kilmark and Associates, in 1987.

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Helping Your Grandchild to Learn and Grow

Do's and Don'ts for Grandparents

Relationships between children and their grandparents can be close and important, and often are inspirational to children. However, they can also be quite destructive. Here are some do's and don'ts for grandparents that will help grandparents, parents, and most of all children.

Here are the DO'S:

DO love your grandchild as much as you'd like. You can't love them too much. If you don't express your love, it is a sad loss for you and your grandchildren.

DO stay in close touch. Telephone your grandchildren directly, or when you're calling their parents, be sure to also talk with the grandchildren. Write letters and send pictures and encourage the children to do the same. Save the children's letters for them. They will appreciate them when they are grown. If grandchildren live nearby, arrange a weekly appointment for doing something special. Introduce them to cultural opportunities for which their parents may not have time.

DO give special enriched learning gifts. Now may be a time in your life when you are able to purchase a set of encyclopedias for your grandchildren that would be too expensive for the parents of young children to afford. Your grandchildren will remember that you're the one who gave them that special gift, and their parents will appreciate your help. If the children's parents can't manage the cost of a computer or a special camp experience, you may be able to help with those opportunities also.

DO share stories about your own childhood. Encourage your grandchildren to tape record your stories. They will have them forever and will always be able to hear your voice. They will appreciate the past and have a better sense of history. Encourage their questions and observations.

DO play competitive games with your grandchildren. Children may be very competitive, so be sure not to let them always win. They should learn to cope with both winning and losing. Children often recall playing cards with Grandma or playing chess and checkers with Grandpa. Games are also a nice way for informal communication to just "happen."

DO create projects with your grandchildren. For example, if you play music, knit, crochet, quilt or sew, or do woodworking or art, share these interests with your grandchildren. Sharing skills can have a great impact on them. It will make the children feel closer to you, and they will learn to appreciate your talents. Furthermore, they will always remember that a particular skill was taught to them by their grandparents.

DO read to your grandchildren. Encouraging children to love books is always valuable for them. You may wish to share books from your own childhood or from their parents' childhoods. Listen to your grandchildren read to you, but only if they enjoy reading aloud. Forcing them to read aloud may cause them to feel pressured.

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DO listen to your grandchildren. Let them talk to you and tell you stories. Be an attentive audience. Children often love to talk, and other children may not be as interested in their stories.

DO say positive things about your grandchildren's parents. If the children believe that you respect their mom and dad, it will help the parents maintain their children's respect. This will be good for your grandchildren and for you. They will respect you, too.

DO give your grandchildren a very clear message about education. Tell them how important school and learning are. Ask your grandchildren about their grades and how they're doing, but even more important, ask them about what they've learned in school. Your interest in their learning encourages their interest in their learning.

Here are the DON'TS:

DON'T spoil your grandchildren by giving them too many material possessions. It makes grandparents feel good to give, but it's not good for children to be given too much. They won't appreciate what they have and will only want more. Each time you walk in the door, they'll expect gifts.

DON'T sabotage your grandchildren's parents. Don't secretly tell the children, for example, "Well, Dad is punishing you, but now that your Dad is gone, I'll let you watch TV even though he said you couldn't." Sabotaging parents is the most damaging thing that grandparents can do. Children often do not understand how to show respect for adults, and siding with them against their parents is likely to encourage opposition and rebelliousness.

DON'T do too much for your grandchildren. Encourage their independence.

DON'T tell grandchildren that they're your favorites. Don't say that they're the smartest, the most creative, the best, or the most special. It may make them feel good, but another grandchild may learn about this message, too. By comparison, the other children will feel less favored. Don't call them "kings" or "princesses." They'll internalize these words as pressures and expectations and may expect too much of themselves or become dependent on praise and attention.

DON'T talk negatively about your grandchildren to their parents when the children might overhear you (referential speaking). The grandparents and parents may say, "He's just a mess," "She's so disorganized," "He's so shy," or "She's afraid to do anything," and the child may hear this and feel negatively labeled. It's always better to talk positively, but do avoid the extremes.

This article was written by Dr. Sylvia Rimm, a child psychologist who directs Family Achievement Clinic with offices in Milwaukee, Madison, Watertown, and Oconomowoc. It originally appeared in *MetroPARENT Magazine's Grandparent's Guide* in December 1993.

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Resources

For Further Reading and Information

For more information about **International Year of the Family in Wisconsin**, contact:
Jacqueline Haessly
Milwaukee Peace Education Resource Center
2437 N. Grant Blvd.
Milwaukee, WI 53210
(414) 445-9736

For a free teacher's packet promoting **global awareness** and **multiculturalism** for National UNICEF Day, call or write to:
The U.S. Committee for UNICEF
P.O. Box 182248
Chattanooga, TN 37422-7248
1 (800) 252-KIDS

To order a copy of the University of Wisconsin-Extension's **"Family Times"** booklet, featuring many activities for families, write to or call:
Agricultural Bulletin, Room 245
30 N. Murray St.
Madison, WI 53715
(608) 262-3346

For further reading about **family communications and traditions**:

Bolton, R. *People Skills.* Englewood Cliffs, NJ: Prentice Hall, 1979.

Carnes, P. *Understanding Us.* Minneapolis: Interpersonal Communication Programs, 1982.

Curran, D. *Traits of a Healthy Family.* Minneapolis: Winston Press, 1983.

Lewis, J. *How's Your Family?.* New York: Brunner/Mazel, 1979.

Lieberman, S. *Let's Celebrate: Creating New Family Traditions.* New York: Perigee, 1984.

The following organizations offer staff in-service and family education programs in **peace education, conflict resolution**, and **alternatives to violence** for community, education, and youth agencies:

Milwaukee Coalition Against Violence in the Schools
Dr. Ian Harris
UW-Milwaukee School of Education
Milwaukee, WI 53211
(414) 229-4323

Milwaukee Violence Prevention Coalition
Sheryl Shellman Weir
Social Development Commission
231 W. Wisconsin Ave.
Milwaukee, WI 53203
(414) 276-0760

Wisconsin Educators for Social Responsibility
Margene Woida
2618 N. Stowell Ave.
Milwaukee, WI 53211
(414) 332-1031

UW-Milwaukee Peace Education Program
Dr. Kahil Khavari
UW-Milwaukee
Milwaukee, WI 53211
(414)229-6549

For further reading about **grandparenting**:

Dodson, Dr. Fitzhugh. *How to Grandparent.* Harper, 1981.

Elkind, David. *Grandparenting.* Scott, Foresman and Co., 1990.

Stoop, Jan, and Betty Southard. *The Grandmother Book.* Thomas Nelson, Inc., 1993.

Wasserman, Selma. *The Long Distance Grandmother.* Hartley & Marks, 1988.

For further information about **grandparenting**, contact:

AARP Grandparent Information Center
Washington, DC
(202) 434-2296

National Coalition of Grandparents
Ethel Dunn
137 Larkin St.
Madison, WI 53705
(608) 238-8751

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